

In the Claims:

Claims 1-128 (Canceled).

129. (Currently Amended) A wear assembly for an excavator having a digging edge, the wear assembly comprising an adapter fixed to the excavator, a wear member, and a lock to secure the wear member to the adapter, one of the adapter and wear member having a nose and the other of the adapter and wear member having a socket for receiving the nose, the nose and the socket each having converging walls converging toward a front end, and opposite sidewalls, one of the socket or nose including at least one rail extending from a sidewall thereof and oriented at the same general inclination as one of the converging walls, and the other of said socket or nose including at least one groove into which the rail is received, wherein the socket is defined by opposed converging surfaces each extending at an inclination to the longitudinal axis of the socket and by side surfaces wherein at least one said side surface includes a lateral surface between the converging surfaces as a part of the at least one groove to engage the rail, and wherein each said lateral surface faces toward one of the converging surfaces and extends generally in the same inclined direction relative to the longitudinal axis as the converging surface the lateral surface faces.

130. (Previously Presented) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 129 further including one said rail on each said sidewall of the nose, a first one of the rails being oriented in the same general inclination as one of the converging wall, and a second one of the rails being oriented in the same general inclination as the other of the converging walls, and the socket including one said groove for receiving each said rail.

131. (Previously Presented) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 129 in which the adapter includes the nose, and the wear member includes the socket.

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132. (Canceled).

133. (Currently Amended) A wear assembly in accordance with claim ~~132~~ 129 in which at least one of the side surfaces includes a flank bearing surface to engage a complementary flank of the nose, and the flank bearing surface and that faces toward a different one of the converging surfaces than the lateral surface of the same side surface face towards different converging surfaces to engage a complementary flank of the nose.

134. (Previously Presented) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 133 in which each flank bearing surface widens as it extends toward the open end of the socket.

135. (Currently Amended) A wear assembly in accordance with claim ~~132~~ 129 in which each lateral surface is uniformly spaced from the converging surface that it faces along its length.

136. (Previously Presented) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 135 wherein each lateral surface is at an acute angle in a transverse direction to the converging surface it faces.

137. (Previously Presented) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 129 in which the socket is defined by opposed converging surfaces each extending at an inclination to the longitudinal axis of the socket and by side surfaces, wherein a distal end of the socket includes opposed flats extending between the side surfaces to engage complementary flats on the nose, and wherein each of the flats extends generally parallel to the longitudinal axis of the socket.

138. (Canceled).

139. (Currently Amended) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 129 wherein the wear member includes the socket, a narrow front end for engaging earthen material,

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and a pair of the grooves in the socket that diverge from opposite sides of a plane aligned with the longitudinal axis of the socket and extending along the narrowed front end.

140. (Previously Presented) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 139 wherein the grooves are generally aligned with each other along the plane at the distal end of the socket.

141. (Previously Presented) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 129 in which each of the grooves has a substantially constant width and depth along its length.

142. (Previously Presented) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 129 wherein each said rail and each said groove is linear.

143. (Previously Presented) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 142 wherein the grooves and rails are configured to require the wear member to rotate generally about its longitudinal axis when installed and removed from the nose.

144. (Previously Presented) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 129 wherein only one rail is formed on each sidewall of the nose or socket.

145. (Previously Presented) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 129 in which the socket has a generally Z-shaped cross-sectional configuration over at least a portion of its length.

146. (Previously Presented) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 129 in which the nose includes a channel for receiving the lock, wherein the channel and the lock each gradually narrows along its length.

147. (Previously Presented) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 146 in which the channel has a closed end and extends only partially across the nose.

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148. (Previously Presented) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 129 in which the wear member is a point with a front digging edge.

149. (Currently Amended) A wear member for an excavator having a lip with a digging edge and a nose fixed to the lip projecting forward from the edge to a front end, the wear member comprising converging walls converging to form a narrow front end, sidewalls, and a socket defined by converging surfaces of the converging walls and side surfaces of the sidewalls, the converging surfaces converging toward the front end, the socket including at least one groove along one of the side surfaces for receiving a rail formed on the nose, and the groove being oriented in the same general inclination as one of the converging surfaces, wherein at least one said side surface includes a lateral surface between the converging surfaces to form part of the at least one groove to engage the corresponding rail, wherein each said lateral surface extends generally in the same inclined direction relative to the longitudinal axis of the socket as the converging surface that the lateral surface faces.

150. (Previously Presented) A wear member in accordance with claim 149 further including one said groove in each of the side surfaces to receive rails on the nose, a first of the grooves being oriented in the same general inclination as one of the converging surfaces and a second of the grooves being oriented in the same general inclination as the other of the converging surfaces.

151. (Canceled).

152. (Currently Amended) A wear member in accordance with claim ~~151~~ 150 in which ~~at least one~~ each said side surface includes a flank bearing surface to engage a complementary flank of the nose, and the flank bearing surface and that faces toward a

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~~different one of the converging surfaces than the lateral surface of the same side face~~
toward different converging surfaces.

153. (Previously Presented) A wear member in accordance with claim 152 in which each flank bearing surface widens as it extends rearward toward the open end and of the socket.

154. (Currently Amended) A wear member in accordance with claim ~~151~~ 149 in which each lateral surface is uniformly spaced from the converging surface that it faces.

155. (Currently Amended) A wear member in accordance with claim ~~151~~ 149 wherein each lateral surface is at an acute angle in a transverse direction to the converging surface it faces.

156. (Currently Amended) A wear member in accordance with claim 149 in which the wear member has a narrow front end and a pair of the grooves within the socket, each including one said lateral surface, wherein the lateral surfaces diverge from opposite sides of a plane aligned with the longitudinal axis of the socket and extending along the front end.

157. (Currently Amended) A wear member in accordance with claim ~~149~~ 156 wherein one of the converging surfaces forms a part of a first of the grooves, and wherein the other of the converging surfaces forms a part of a second of the grooves.

158. (Previously Presented) A wear member in accordance with claim 149 in which a front end of the socket includes opposed flats extending between the sidewalls, wherein each of the flats extends generally parallel to the longitudinal axis of the socket.

159. (Previously Presented) A wear member in accordance with claim 149 in which the socket has a generally Z-shaped cross-sectional configuration over at least a portion of its length.

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160. (Previously Presented) A wear member in accordance with claim 149 wherein the socket has only one groove on each of the side surfaces for receiving the rails.

161. (Previously Presented) A wear member in accordance with claim 149 wherein the grooves are linear.

162. (Previously Presented) A wear member in accordance with claim 161 wherein the groove and rails are configured so as to require the wear member to rotate generally about its longitudinal axis when installed and removed from the nose.

163. (Previously Presented) A wear member in accordance with claim 149 in which is a point with a front digging edge.

164. (Previously Presented) A method for attaching a wear member to an excavator comprising:

providing a nose fixed to the excavator and projecting forward from the digging edge to a front end, the nose having first and second walls converging toward the front end, and a pair of opposite sides interconnecting the first and second walls, each said side including a rail, a first one of the rails being oriented in the same general inclination as the first wall, and a second one of the rails being oriented in the same general inclination as the second wall, and each of the rails including an outer side face;

providing a wear member including a socket having opposite converging surfaces and opposite side surfaces;

placing the wear member over the nose such that the nose is received into the socket so that (i) the converging surfaces each engage one the first and second walls of the nose, (ii) the side surfaces each engage the outer side face of one of the rails, and (iii) the nose and wear member collectively define an opening; and

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inserting a lock into the opening to secure the wear member to the nose.

165. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 164 wherein each said rail on the provided nose includes a transverse face generally parallel to one of the converging walls, and wherein the wear member is placed on the nose so that each said side surface also engages the transverse face of one of the rails.

166. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 165 wherein the opening has an open end through which the lock is inserted, the opening narrows in an extension away from the open end, and a tapered lock is pried into the opening with a leverage tool.

167. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 164 wherein the opening has an open end through which the lock is inserted, the opening narrows in an extension away from the open end, and a tapered lock is pried into the opening with a leverage tool.

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